AFTER SCHOOL cNIGHTMARE Chapter 25

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SO, I WOULDN'T MIND IF YOU WANTED TO TRY GETTING CLOSER TO HIM.
WELL, MASHIRO-KUN AND I ARE OVER.
CHEW
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
.....
I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO SUGAR-COAT IT FOR ME.
Not that I think you would...
OH.
IF YOU ARE MAKING PROGRESS AND JUST DON'T WANT TO TELL ME, JUST SAY SO. I WON'T MIND.
NO, THINGS ARE...
...THE SAME AS ALWAYS.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?

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...YOU SURE YOU WOULDN'T MIND?
IF SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN BETWEEN HIM AND ME...
...INSTEAD OF SOMEONE TOTALLY RANDOM.
BUT, I THINK I'D PREFER TO HAVE HIM GO OUT WITH YOU...
HMM.
I GUESS I WON'T KNOW UNTIL IT HAPPENS.
...I'D BE REALLY SHOCKED.
AND...
...IF THAT SOMEONE HAPPENED TO BE A GIRL...

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HE ACCEPTS RELATIONSHIPS IMMEDIATELY WITHOUT QUESTIONING HIS FEELINGS.
HE ONLY MAKES FRIENDS WITH PEOPLE ON THE SURFACE, WITHOUT EVEN REALLY THINKING ABOUT IT.
IT'S SO FAKE.
IT'S PEACE-FUL...
...WITHOUT HIM.
I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT GETTING JERKED AROUND.
TELL ME ABOUT IT!
WHENEVER SOMEONE TRIES TO REALLY GET CLOSE, HE FREAKS OUT AND UP GO THE WALLS.
SOMETHING ABOUT HIS ATTITUDE IS JUST SO HALF-ASSED.
EXACTLY!
HE HAS THESE CRAZY EXPECTATIONS FOR BOTH GUYS AND GIRLS.
THE LOWEST OF THE LOW!!
SO LOW.
TOTALLY AWK-WARD!
HE'S SO AWKWARD.

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.....
.....
I KNOW! WHY DON'T YOU AND I GO OUT?
SMACK
IT'D BE THE BEST REVENGE EVER IF HE HAD TO SEE US BEING ALL LOVEY-DOVEY IN FRONT OF HIM!
I CONSIDERED IT, BUT...
Oh really?
BUT FOR A SECOND, I REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
YEAH.
I WAS JUST KIDDING, YOU KNOW.
HEY
UH...

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I DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT SOU.
JUST THAT HE'S REALLY CLOSE TO HIS SISTER.
AND HIS MOM'S A FAMOUS FLOWER DESIGNER.
I FOUND OUT THAT SOU'S MOM WOULD BE APPEARING ON A RADIO SHOW...
...SO I STAYED IN MY ROOM TO LISTEN TO IT.
I FIGURED I'D LEARN AT LEAST SOMETHING.
NOW THEN, MIZUHASHI-SAN, WE ALL KNOW YOU'RE EXTREMELY BUSY WITH ALL YOUR ACTIVITIES, BUT...
...TAKING A PEEK INTO YOUR PRIVATE LIFE, YOU'RE ALSO A MOTHER OF TWO, ARE YOU NOT?
YES, I AM.
SO, DO THEY WANT TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS?

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JUST LIKE MY FLOWERS, THEY WERE RAISED STRONG SO THEY COULD GROW ON THEIR OWN
MY SON AND DAUGHTER ARE VERY DIFFERENT PEOPLE.
I RAISED MY CHILDREN TO BE INDIVIDUALS.
WELL... NOW, THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.
WHETHER I'M AT WORK OR HOME, I BELIEVE MY ROLE IS THE SAME.
AND I GAVE THEM ENOUGH CARE TO LET THEM BLOOM INTO STRONG, CONFIDENT PEOPLE.
...AND VERY STRONG.
HER VOICE WAS SO CHEERFUL...
WHEN I HEARD THAT, I THOUGHT SHE SOUNDED SO IMPRESSIVE.
HER FLOWERS FACED THE WORLD WITH AN AURA OF CONFIDENCE AND STRENGTH.

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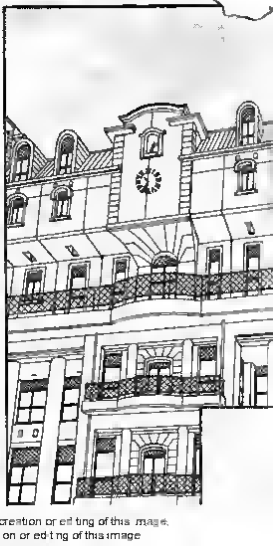

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OH! UH...
WHAT?
I DIDN'T REALLY MEAN TO SAY ANY-THING...
UH... WELL...
... WHY?
BECAUSE OF MY MOM, RIGHT?
HUH? OH, UM...
I WAS WONDERING IF...YOU LIKED FLOWERS.
OH, UM.
IT'S NOT IMPOR-TANT, BUT...
I DON'T PARTICULARLY LIKE FLOWERS, BUT I DON'T HATE THEM.
AND I'M WHO I AM.
SHE IS WHO SHE IS.

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I'M GLAD YOU DECIDED TO COME BACK TO CLASS, MASHIRO-KUN.
THERE ARE THOSE STUDENTS WHO GRADU-ATE, BUT...
...THERE ARE ALSO THOSE WHO SIMPLY GIVE UP AND FADE AWAY.
I WAS SO AFRAID ALL THE PROGRESS YOU'VE MADE WOULD GO TO WASTE...

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ARE YOU SAYING EVERYTHING THOSE PEOPLE ACCOMPLISHED MEANS NOTHING ONCE THEY'RE GONE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...
...GO TO WASTE?
I GUESS I UNDER-STAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...
I...
...I'M SORRY...

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OH, YOU DO. I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT BEFORE.
THE DREAM'S BEEN LIKE THIS SINCE THE WEEK BEFORE LAST.
OUCH...
WHAT HAPPENED? I MISS TWO CLASSES, AND EVERY-THING'S DIFFERENT.
I HAVE SO MANY BEADS...
...HELLO.
I GUESS ONE OF THE OTHER DREAMERS PUT IT THERE.
I WONDER IF YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO THAT...
SPLIT
THERE'S A BEAD CORD HANGING FROM IT...
WHAT'S THIS DEAD TREE DOING HERE?

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I SWEAR...
YOU'RE LIKE AN EXPERT AT HURTING PEOPLE.
.....?
I'D REALLY APPRECIATE IT IF YOU STAYED AWAY FROM SO... UNTIL YOU LEARN SOME MANNERS
IT'S SO ANNOYING.
BUT HE MAY ACTUALLY STILL LIKE ME.
I DON'T EVEN UNDER-STAND.
YOU WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND.
THA...
...MY CHOICE.
THAT'S...
SO, I...
...IS SOMETHING REALLY IMPORTANT.
MAYBE THE REASON HE SUDDENLY CAN'T TALK TO ME...

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YOU'RE THEIR MOTHER!! YOU SHOULD RAISE THEM!
WHAT KIND OF REMARK IS THAT!?
SLAM
YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED A DIVORCE, REMEMBER!?
A MOTHER SHOULDN'T WANT TO BE AWAY FROM HER CHILDREN!
I'VE GOT A JOB, YOU KNOW! I'M BUSY!!
WELL, DON'T EXPECT ME TO, EITHER!
AI IS ONE THING, BUT YOU KNOW HOW SOU CAN BE..
YOU CAN'T JUST SUDDENLY EXPECT HER TO RAISE TWO CHILDREN!
SOU!!
THEY'D ALL BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT ME...
SOU.
LET'S GO.
SIS-TER.
THEY DON'T WANT ME.
NOBODY LIKES ME.
YOU THINK ALL WOMEN HAVE AN AUTOMATIC MATERNAL INSTINCT YOU CAN TURN ON WHENEVER IT'S CONVENIENT FOR YOU!
WHO ARE YOU TO MAKE UP RULES LIKE THAT!?

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R.I.P
I HEARD SOU MIZUHASHI FROM CLASS C'S GOING AFTER KUREHA FUJISHIMA THIS TIME!!
WHA ...!?
WHAT'S ON MY BACK ...!?
THE REASON MASHIRO ICHIJO DUMPED KUREHA FUJISHIMA...
...IS BECAUSE SHE CHEATED ON HIM WITH THAT THIRD-YEAR STUDENT!
WHAT IS THIS THING!?

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TWITCH
TWITCH
IT'S A PARASITE
THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOU HAD SIX BEADS.
—n English the west— XX fr m Class XX—
LOOKS LIKE...
...A TUMOR WITH A FACE.
I HEARD THAT SINCE AOYAMA* FROM CLASS A IS GOING OUT WITH THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL SHE CAN BREAK THE RULES AND TOTALLY GET AWAY WITH IT.
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM!? BE QUIET!!
SHUT UP!!
ND KAKIMOTO* FROM CLASS C-
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
YOU WANT IT TO SHUT UP?
LOOKS LIKE YOUR PRINCE IS HERE TO GRANT YOUR WISH.
XX fr m Class XX has been absent f r many days—
—he came to her and now she might have to leave school

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XX from Class X was caught in the middle of the night—
MAYBE IT'LL MAKE HIM LIKE YOU BETTER. ♡
WELL, THE KID ALWAYS DID LIKE THAT SORT OF THING.
—XX from Class X got in a huge fight and—
WHAT A LAUGH! LOOK AT YOU, ACTING LIKE SOME BIG, STRONG HERO.
SOU ...!
—s mom cheated on his father
A NEWBIE, PERHAPS?
THAT'S SOME CHATTERBOX YOU'VE GOT THERE
YOU MAKE ME SICK...!
SWING

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I MEAN REALLY, HOW CAN A PARASITE LIKE THAT GRADUATE?
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT ANOTHER WEIRD ONE.
AT LEAST I SHUT THAT THING UP.
OOH, YOU CHOPPED HIM RIGHT UP.
I thought he'd get to stick around a little longer.

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IT WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENTLY FROM WHAT I'D IMAGINED.
SOU'S HOME.
SOU'S MOTHER.
I WAS WONDERING IF...YOU LIKED FLOWERS.
I DELUDE MYSELF...
...AND THINK ONLY IN DREAMS.
BUT THEN, I SUPPOSE I HAVE A HABIT OF ONLY SEEING THINGS IN WAYS I CAN ACCEPT.

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I WONDER IF I MADE HIM UNCOMFORTABLE.
AND I'M LEARNING MORE ABOUT MYSELF.
...IT TOLD ME A LITTLE MORE ABOUT HIM.
BUT AT LEAST..
I'M MOVING FORWARD... RIGHT?

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IT'S JUST, I SAW MASHIRO-KUN SMILING.
WHAT'S THIS DEAD TREE DOING HERE?
AFTER WE BROKE UP
...I FELT LIKE I'D DIED A LITTLE...
...AND HE'S STILL ABLE TO SMILE.
WHEN I SAW THAT SMILE, I JUST...

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Chapter 25 / OVER

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ARE THE RUMORS ABOUT YOU AND KUREHA TRUE?
NO.
WE'RE NOT GOING OUT.

I'M A FOOL.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED IF THEY WERE GOING OUT.
I SHOULD HAVE ASKED IF HE LIKED HER...

TMP
TMP
TMP
……

PHEW!
THAT SURPRISED ME!
BOW
I'M SOR-RY...
...FOR DOING THAT WITHOUT ASKING.
My apologies
A ha ha ha ha!
HEH, I WAS SO SURPRISED, I STOPPED CRYING!
4.
HONESTLY, I WAS FAIRLY CERTAIN YOU'D SEND ME FLYING.
That was the old me
NAH, I KNEW YOU SAW MASHIRO-KUN THERE.
SO I FIGURED PRETTY MUCH WHAT YOU WERE THINKING.

...TRUST YOU, MIZUHASHI.
BE-SIDES...
I...
YOU HELPED ME GET MY REVENGE ON HIM...
...FOR MAKING ME CRY.
MAYBE IT'S JUST BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN EATING LUNCH TOGETHER.
...DO YOU THINK THAT'S WEIRD?
...NO...
This is getting embarrassing.
I DIDN'T DO IT JUST SO YOU COULD HAVE YOUR REVENGE.
MASHIRO-KUN MUST BE PRETTY SHOCKED, I'M SURE...
BUT REALLY, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT JUST FOR ME.

I WANTED TO PUSH HIM AWAY.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH.
I DON'T WANT HIM COMING NEAR ME WITH HIS SUPERFICIAL FEELINGS.

I HAVE NO INTENTION...

...OF FALLING FOR THE SAME THING TWICE.

THANK YOU FOR THE LESSONS.
WE'RE GONNA HEAD OUT NOW.
GOOD WORK, GUYS.
REMEMBER, DON'T BE LATE FOR TOMORROW'S MORNING PRACTICE.
RATTLE
RATTLE
SHIT

...ICHI-JO.
YOU CAME IN TODAY...?
.....

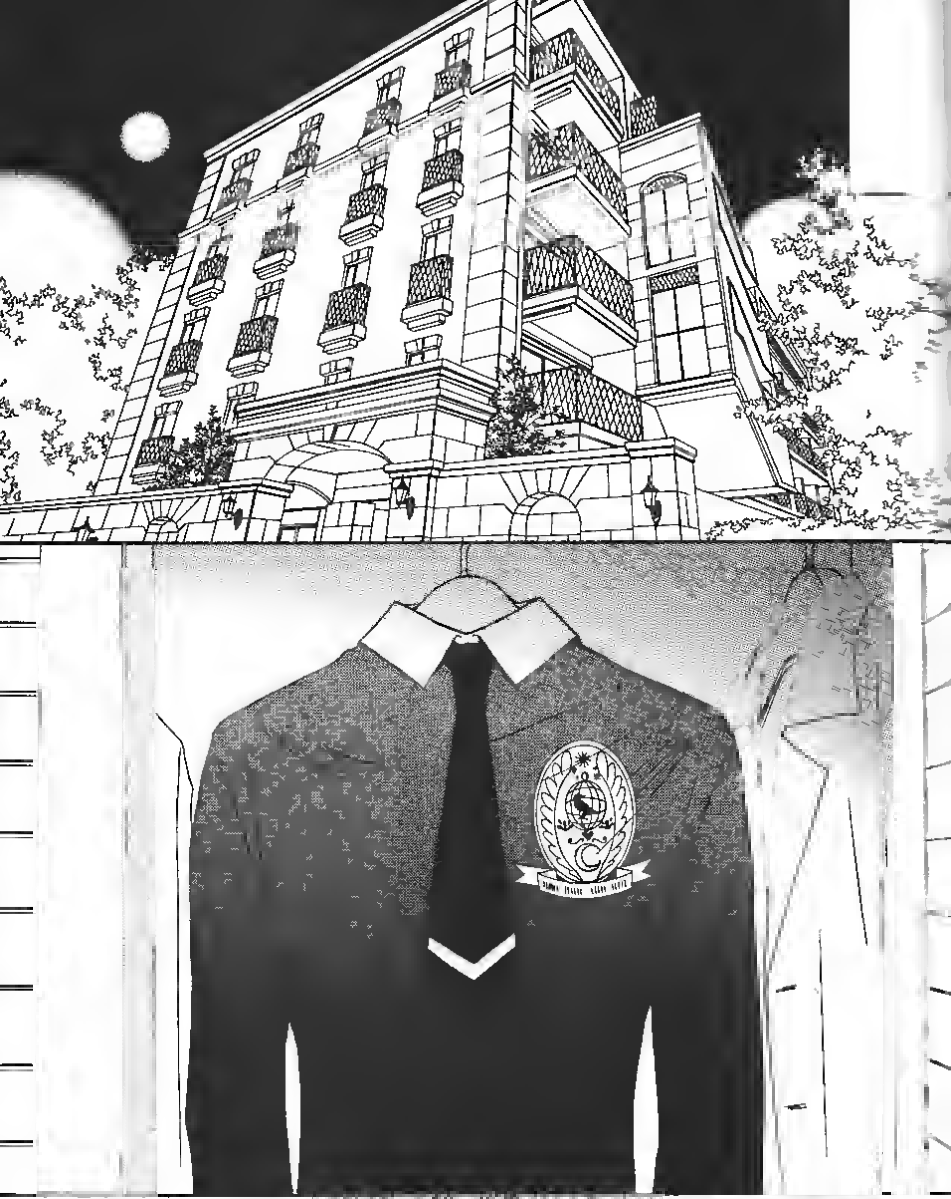
I'M SORRY...
I SAID I'D COME TO PRACTICE REGULARLY...
BUT... SOME STUFF CAME UP...
...
OH.
I SEE.
SO... NOW WHAT?
YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE YOU WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE, RIGHT?
SEM-PAI...
IF...
...YOU SAW SOMEBODY YOU USED TO LIKE, AND WHO'D SAID THEY LIKED YOU, KISS ANOTHER PERSON, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

.....
.....
YOU SAID EVERYTHING IN THE PAST TENSE.
IF WHOEVER IT WAS CAN FORGET THEIR FEELINGS SO EASILY, YOU'D BE BETTER OFF DOING THE SAME.

FROM WHAT I HEAR, YOU'RE NOT EVEN SURE IF YOU STILL LIKE THE PERSON OR NOT.
ISN'T THIS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OUT HOW YOU REALLY FEEL?
じわ
TEARS
IT MAY BE THE RIGHT ANSWER, BUT IT'S NOT SO EASY, IS IT?
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO FIND THE RIGHT PATH. WHETHER YOU WERE JUST BEING PRESSURED INTO A RELATIONSHIP...
...OR YOU REALLY WERE IN LOVE WITH THEM, NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE IT RIGHT.
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D MAKE YOU STRONGER TO LEARN FROM THIS PAIN?

FIRST AND FOREMOST...
...I HAVE TO FIGURE OUT EXACTLY WHAT I'M FEELING AND WHY.
YEAH...
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'M GLAD I ASKED YOU, SEMPAI.
I KNEW I COULD COME TO YOU. YOU'RE SO MATURE.
THAT'S WHY YOU ALWAYS KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
I'M ONLY SEVENTEEN.
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING. I DON'T HAVE ANY REAL EXPERIENCE.

SEMPAI'S SO MODEST.
NO ...!
YOU REALLY HELPED ME CALM DOWN.
THANK YOU.
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T HELP MORE.
SEM-PAI...?
HE'S SO MATURE AND RELIABLE. IT FEELS LIKE HE'S ALWAYS RIGHT.
HE ALWAYS PUTS MY MIND AT EASE...



SHUT
SO WHAT?
I ALWAYS THOUGHT...
...YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL THE WAY YOU ARE.
IF YOU CAN'T DECIDE...
...THEN I'LL DECIDE FOR YOU.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU THINK, SOU...
...OR WHAT YOU SAY...
...I WILL NEVER FALL FOR YOU.
I CRUSHED THOSE FEELINGS FOR GOOD.
THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT, IF YOU DON'T HOLD ONTO THEM, YOU LOSE THEM FOREVER.

I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED...
...HOW MUCH THAT TREE MEANT TO HER.
I DIDN'T GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT.
...THE DEAD TREE SYMBOLIZED HER HEART.
BUT NOW I KNOW...
EVEN SINCE WE BROKE UP, KUREHA KEPT ON LAUGHING AND SMILING WITH HER FRIENDS.
SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE TEARS IN HER EYES.

IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT THEY FALL FOR EACH OTHER.
SHE'S A FAR BETTER GIRL THAN I AM, AND HE'S A FAR BETTER GUY.
DON'T YOU THINK IT'D MAKE YOU STRONGER TO LEARN FROM THIS PAIN?

I DON'T EVEN CARE WHAT MY DREAMS HAVE TO SAY.
I JUST WANT TO SLEEP. EVEN IF ONLY FOR A MINUTE.

AND SO, WITH JOAN OF ARC'S CAMPAIGN...
...FRANCE'S CORONATION WAS REALIZED ON JULY 17, 1429.
THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR
1420 TREATY OF TROYES
ENGLAND/HENRY VI
FRANCE/CHARLES VII
AND CHARLES VII WAS OFFICIALLY CROWNED KING OF FRANCE.

MASHIRO-KUN.

MASHIRO-KUN.
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
.....
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO...?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW...
YOU'RE NOT GONNA DO ANYTHING?

YOU'RE JUST GOING TO SIT BACK AND WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE?
YOU'RE STRONG, KUREHA.
I KNOW THAT, NOW.
WOMEN HAVE AN INNATE STRENGTH. THEY GET UPSET EASILY, BUT THEY ALWAYS THINK ABOUT HOW TO MOVE ON.
THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS...
...I KNOW FOR SURE I WOULDN'T MAKE A GOOD GIRL, AT ALL.

YOU'RE SO LUCKY, MASHIRO-KUN.
YOU HAVE SOMETHING NO ONE ELSE DOES.

IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING 'MADE' TO BE ONE OR THE OTHER.
MOST PEOPLE DON'T GET TO CHOOSE, SO THEY JUST DO THE BEST THEY CAN.
THAT'S WHY I SAID YOU'RE LUCKY. AS LONG AS YOU CAN SAY "BECAUSE I'M NOT A GUY" OR "BECAUSE I'M NOT A GIRL"...
...YOU HAVE ENOUGH EXCUSES TO LAST YOUR WHOLE LIFE ♡

SLAP
わら PANIC
HOLD IT, MASHIRO-KUN!! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HIT HER! MEN LIKE YOU ARE THE WORST!
I'M FINE. IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.
KUREHA, ARE YOU OKAY!?
C'MON, LET'S GO.
PANIC わら
MASHIRO-KUN, YOU'RE HORRIBLE!!

I'M FINE.
Everyone's exaggerating
YOU OKAY?
HE'S NOT THAT MAD ABOUT THE KISS, IS HE?
SOMETHING ABOUT YOU GETTING SLAPPED BY ICHIJO...?
THE GIRLS WERE IN AN UPROAR.
MASHIRO-KUN REALLY IS A GIRL.
YOU KNEW, RIGHT?
A REAL MAN WOULD NEVER HAVE HIT ME...

I CAN EXPECT A SLAP OR TWO.
I HURT MASHIRO-KUN BAD BY KISSING YOU.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO OFFER HIM YOUR CHEEK TO FIGURE THAT OUT...
.....
I'M THE ONE WHO KISSED YOU.
AND I'M THE ONE WHO SAID WE SHOULD.

I'M...
...THINKING OF GOING HOME.
THERE'S A PART OF ME I STILL DESPISE.
A PART I'M ALWAYS FIGHTING.
I THOUGHT I'D WON.
I THOUGHT I LOCKED IT AWAY.

BUT MAYBE THAT WASN'T IT.
MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE...
...I HAVE TO DO.
SO, I'M GOING BACK TO WHERE IT ALL STARTED.
I'M GOING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO OVERCOME THIS.

YOUR HOME...?
.....
BUT...
YOU'LL COME BACK, RIGHT?
UNTIL I GET BACK...
...YOU MAKE PROGRESS YOURSELF, YOU HEAR ME?

IF...
FUJISHI-MA...
...WHILE YOU'RE THERE...
...IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE ALL ALONE...
...OR THERE'S SOMETHING THAT REALLY UPSETS YOU...
...CALL ME.
OKAY.
THANKS.
WELL, I'M GOING NOW.

ALL I DO IS RUN AWAY.
BLACK B
SHE SURE IS BRAVE.
.....
...AND THE ARMOR.
FROM MY SISTER..

...WENT BACK HOME?
KURE-HA...
HUH...?
ISN'T IT BECAUSE OF YOU, MASHIRO-KUN?
I DON'T KNOW! WE DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.
WHY? FOR HOW LONG? SHE'LL COME BACK, RIGHT?

HEY.
SOU, DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?
ABOUT KUREHA GOING BACK HOME?
YEAH, I DO.
BUT I'M NOT TELLING YOU.
WHY NOT!?
IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO SAY. I'M NOT GOING TO GOSSIP ABOUT HER PERSONAL LIFE.
THAT'S JUST COMMON COURTESY, DON'T YOU THINK?
.....
FINE ...
SO, IN SHORT ...
...YOU AND KUREHA ARE SO CLOSE...
...THAT YOU SHARE SECRETS YOU CAN'T EVEN TELL OTHER PEOPLE, IS THAT IT?

DON'T WORRY, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE QUIT SCHOOL OR ANYTHING BECAUSE OF YOU.
THERE'S NOTHING FOR YOU TO FEEL GUILTY OVER.
DO YOU FEEL BETTER NOW?
THAT'S NOT WHY I ASKED YOU!!
THEN, WHY?
IF YOU LIKE FUJISHIMA SO MUCH, WHY DON'T YOU CALL AND ASK HER NOT TO LEAVE?

I...
THAT'S NOT IT, EITHER!!
YOU'RE JUST GOING TO SIT BACK AND WAIT...
...FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE?

.....
TODAY...
...AFTER SCHOOL...
...COME TO MY ROOM.

I WANT TO SIT DOWN AND TALK WITH YOU.
JUST...
...THE TWO OF US.
I HAVE TO SHOW SOU...
...MYSELF AS A GIRL.

THADUMP
THADUMP
THADUMP
THADUMP
THADUMP
THADUMP
GROSS-ES ME OUT...
WHAT'LL I DO IF HE SAYS THAT TO ME?
THAT LOOKS HORRIBLE ON YOU!
WHAT IF HE SAYS THAT TO ME?
HE'S SEEN ME PLENTY OF TIMES LIKE THIS IN THE DREAMS...
...BUT IT'S A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT STORY WHEN IT'S IN REAL LIFE...
THADUMP
THADUMP
THADUMP

EVEN WORSE...
OR...
WHAT IF HE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING AT ALL!?
SO?
.....
I JUST...
...HAVE TO TALK TO HIM.
YOU IDIOT. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HE SAYS.
DOOOM
DOOOM
DOOOM
What do I do?
What do I do?
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
ABOUT EVERYTHING.
HONESTLY...!

COME ON...
...IN.
ICHIJO?
IT'S ME, KUROSAKI.

I'M COMING IN.
KLATCH
YOU DIDN'T COME TO PRACTICE TODAY, SO I THOUGHT I'D HAND YOU THIS MEMO.
WAIT!!
I CAN GET IT FROM YOU, LATER!!
IT'S A MESS!!
MY ROOM!
JUST WAIT!! PLEASE DON'T OPEN THE DOOR, YET!!
ICHIJO?
UM...
OH, COME ON.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR ROOM.
I'M JUST GOING TO DROP THIS OFF--
CREAK

Chapter 26 / OVER

MY DADDY'S THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO HATES IT WHEN THINGS DON'T GO HIS WAY.
WHEN HE'S NOT HAPPY ABOUT SOMETHING, HE TAKES HIS ANGER OUT ON THINGS, OR EVEN MOM.
CLACK カチ
AND MY MOM IS THE TYPE TO STAY OUT OF HIS WAY AND SAY NOTHING, OR BREAK DOWN IN TEARS AND APOLOGIZE.
AS FOR ME...
I'M...
CLACK カチ
CLACK カチ
CLACK カチ

……
……

CREAK
SL
LIM...
BLAH
BLAH
SLAM
SEMPAI!! SHUT THE DOOR! HURRY!!

BLAH
BLAH
Ha ha ha ha ha
BLAH
You serious!?
BLAH
BLAH
THADUMP
THADUMP

I HAVE TO TELL THE TRUTH.
IT'S SEMPAI...
I'M SURE IT'LL BE OKAY.
I'M...
...A...
...GIRL!!
I CAN EXPLAIN.
UM... SEMPAI
I, UH...
IF I CAN'T COME UP WITH A GOOD REASON FOR THIS, IT'LL JUST CAUSE A WORSE MISUNDER-STANDING...
IT'S NO GOOD.
UH...
WELL...

I SAID I WAS A GIRL!!
I'M JUST HALF A GIRL. THE OTHER'S HALF'S A GUY!!
NO, I MEAN...
.....
I'M SURE YOU THINK THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE, BUT... UM...
FRET
I MEAN... THAT IS, THE CHROMOSOMES IN MY TOP HALF ARE XY BUT MY BOTTOM ONES ARE XX!!
UUH, I MEAN ...!
BUT, RECENTLY...
...I'VE BEEN TRYING TO... TO SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE AS... A GIRL...
WHAT AM I DOING!? I'M NOT MAKING ANY SENSE!!

.....
.....
I'M SORRY...
I m that w
...APOLO-GIZING?
WHY ARE YOU...
BECAUSE YOU HAD TO SEE SOMETHING SO WEIRD...
WELL...
...WHAT YOU THINK?
OR IS THAT...
WHOEVER SAID THAT TO YOU?

I THINK YOU LOOK CUTE.
VERY.

I WANT TO SIT DOWN AND TALK WITH YOU.
COME TO MY ROOM.

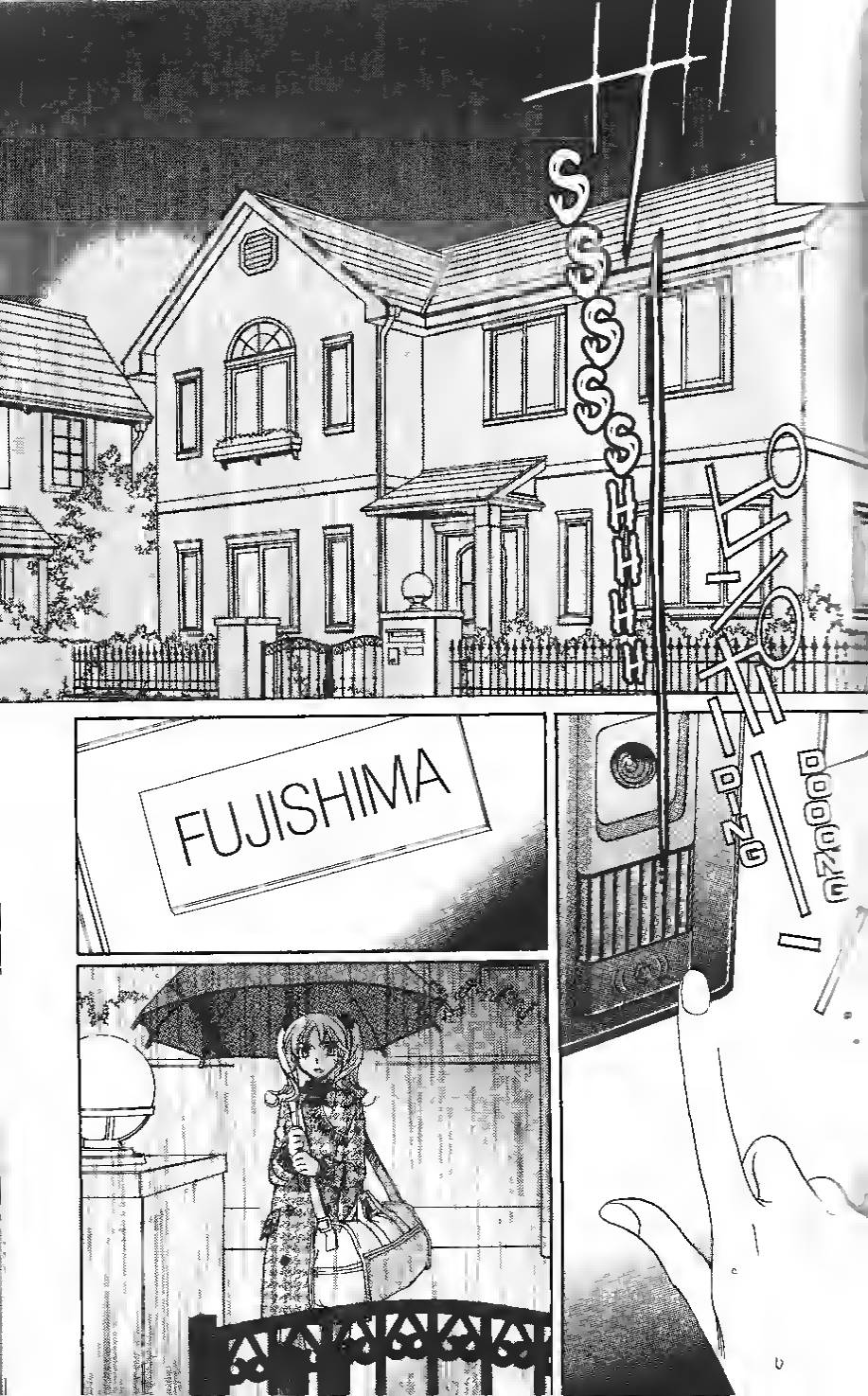
WHEN I LOOK AT MYSELF IN THE MIRROR, LATELY...
...I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT I THINK I CAN START TO ACCEPT WHO I AM.
SO, I WEAR THIS SOMETIMES.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE...
...EVER SHOWN ANYONE.
ER, I MEAN, ANYONE'S SEEN IT.
BUT, UH SEMPAI...
IF YOU COULD NOT TELL ANYBODY ABOUT THIS...
I KNOW.
FROM NOW ON...
...CAN WE JUST ACT THE SAME...
...AS WE HAVE SO FAR?

OF COURSE.
WELL, I SHOULD GET GOING.
A MAN SHOULDN'T STAY TOO LONG IN A YOUNG GIRL'S BEDROOM, AFTER ALL.
Young girl's bedroom
KNOCK
KNOCK
ICHIJO IT'S ME.
!!
YOU THERE?

FRET オロ
FRET オロ
WHAT'S WITH THIS HORRIBLE TIMING!?
WHAT DO I DO!?!?
YOU SEE...
UM...
UH...!
SORRY, TODAY'S NOT A GOOD DAY!!
GO AWAY!!
...WHAT?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED TO TALK.
YEAH, BUT...
I'M SORRY, I JUST CAN'T DO IT TODAY!!
I'LL TALK WITH YOU NEXT TIME, I SWEAR, SO FOR RIGHT NOW JUST GO HOME...!

GO HIDE.
WE CAN'T HAVE HIM SEEING YOU LIKE THAT, RIGHT?
I'LL GO OUT THERE AND SMOOTH THINGS OVER.
.....
.....
O... KAY...
I DID THIS TO SHOW SOU IN THE FIRST PLACE!
WHY'D THIS HAVE TO HAPPEN!?
HEY, ICHIJO-
KLATCH

I WAS VISITING HIM.
ICHIJO ISN'T FEELING WELL, SO HE'S RESTING NOW. HE SHOULDN'T BE BOTHERED.
SHUT
.....
IS THAT SO...
I GET IT.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OH.
...KURE-HA.
YOU CAME HOME?
WERE YOU ASLEEP?
YEAH.
WHERE'S MOM?
SHE'S AT WORK.
SHE WORKS AT THE FLOWER SHOP ACROSS FROM THE STATION.
SHE SHOULD BE HOME SOON, THOUGH.
OH... UH...
KLATCH
KUREHA! YOU'RE BACK?
DON'T WORRY, I'LL DO IT.
IT'S OVER THERE IN THE...UH, WHICH WAS IT, AGAIN...?
SHE SAID THERE WAS STEW TO HEAT UP IF SHE WAS LATE.

HONEY, HAVE YOU GROWN ON ME?
I'M... HOME...
WELCOME BACK, KUREHA!
OH NO, YOU HAVEN'T EATEN YET!?
I TOLD YOU THERE WAS FOOD ALREADY MADE. DARLING, WAKE UP! IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE KUREHA'S COME HOME TO SEE US!
RIGHT...
OKAY...
I SWEAR, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SOMETIMES!

MY DAD WAS ALWAYS SO DOMINEERING AND TOUGH ON EVERYONE.
BUT NOW HE HAS A SUPER-EASY JOB, SO HE COMES HOME EARLY AND JUST LAZES ABOUT ALL DAY.
AND I GUESS MY MOM GOT A JOB ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO.
HER SMILE WAS SO BRIGHT, SHE SEEMED LIKE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON...
WHAT HAP-PENED...
...TO THIS HOUSE?

I DON'T WANT ANY. THANKS FOR DINNER.
CLATTER
I BOUGHT SOME PUMPKIN PUDDING CAKE FOR DESSERT. WOULD YOU LIKE SOME?
OH, KURE
TMP
TMP
TMP
SLAM

CAN SHE REALLY LET GO OF ALL THAT SO EASILY?
HE ALWAYS USED TO TREAT HER SO HORRIBLY.
WHAT ABOUT ME?
SHOULD I JUST LET WHAT HAPPENED TO ME BE NOTHING MORE THAN A MEMORY?
WHY DOESN'T MY MOM DO ANYTHING?
SHE COULD PUT DAD THROUGH ALL KINDS OF HELL, NOW.

HOW CAN I JUST FORGET THAT!?

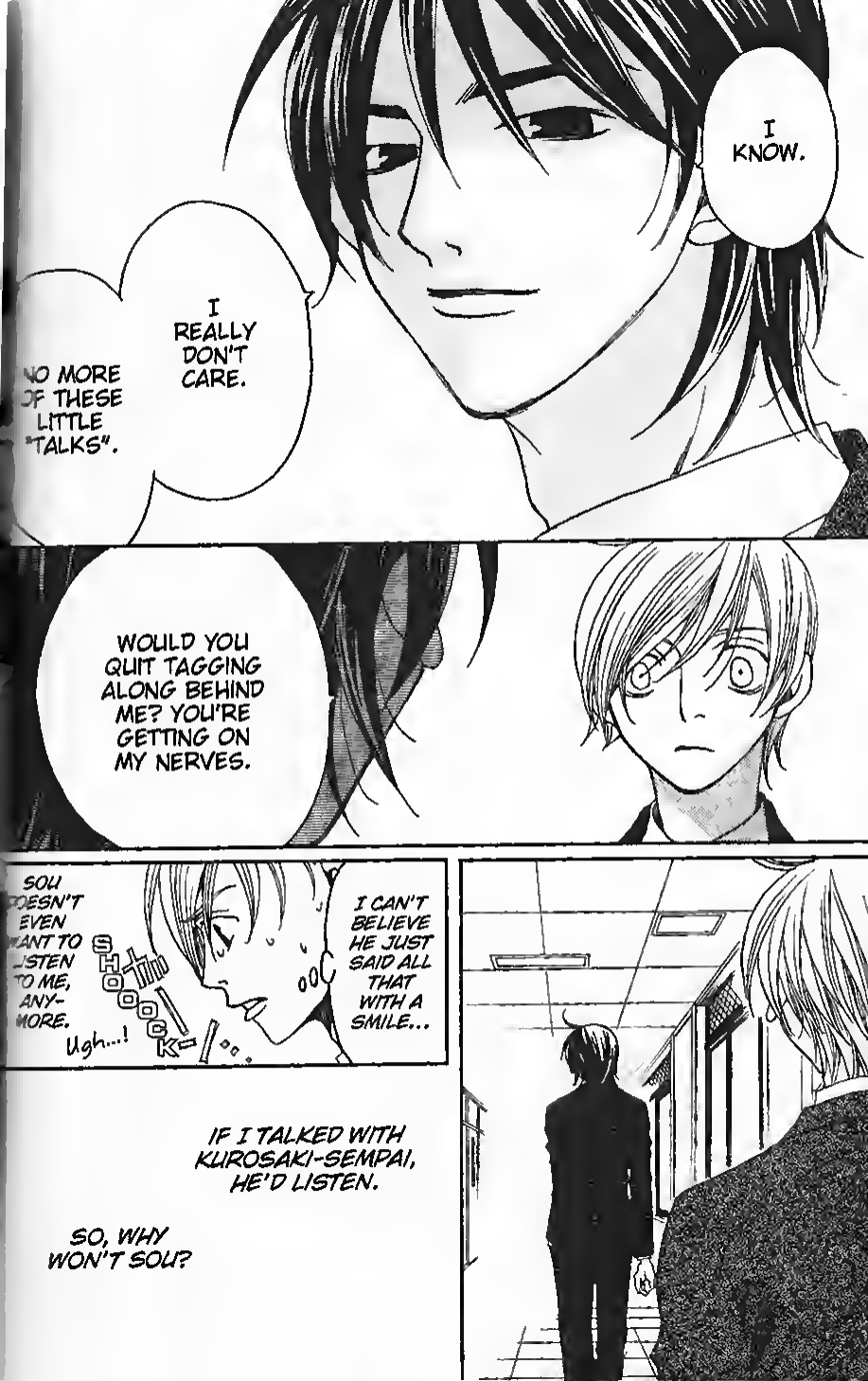
"ESPECIALLY PATHETIC"?
BUT WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN? "SPECIAL."
THE OTHER DAY, YOU SAID I WAS "SPECIAL."
...BECAUSE I WANTED MASHIRO-KUN TO THINK I WAS STRONG.
I SAID THAT...
...DO I EVER REALLY WANT TO GROW UP?
BUT DEEP DOWN...

DO I JUST WANT TO STAY A HURT LITTLE GIRL, SO NO MATTER HOW I ACT OR WHAT I DO, I'LL BE FORGIVEN?

IF THERE'S SOMETHING THAT REALLY UPSETS YOU, CALL ME.
YOU'LL COME BACK, RIGHT?
BUT...
MIZUHASHI SAID THAT...

...AND JUST THROW IT AWAY FOREVER.
IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO TAKE THIS ROTTING, DIRTY THING...

I ALREADY SAID I'M SORRY.
I KNOW IT WAS WRONG...
...TO ASK YOU TO COME AND THEN TELL YOU TO GO.
NO, I WILL NOT DROP IT!
LOOK, I DON'T CARE ANYMORE.
.....!
I'M APOLO-GIZING!!
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE LIKE THAT!?
BUT SOME STUFF CAME UP, AND I HAD NO CHOICE.
YEAH, YEAH, STUFF CAME UP. I KNOW ALREADY, SO JUST DROP IT.
CAN WE TRY THIS AGAIN ...?
SO, PLEASE...


I KNOW.
I REALLY DON'T CARE.
NO MORE OF THESE LITTLE "TALKS".
WOULD YOU QUIT TAGGING ALONG BEHIND ME? YOU'RE GETTING ON MY NERVES.
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE JUST SAID ALL THAT WITH A SMILE...
SHOCK
Ugh...!
SOU DOESN'T EVEN WANT TO LISTEN TO ME, ANY-MORE.
IF I TALKED WITH KUROSAKI-SEMPAI, HE'D LISTEN.
SO, WHY WON'T SOU?

HE SPENT SO MUCH TIME WITH KUREHA.
BUT HE WON'T TALK TO ME.
IS IT BECAUSE HE JUST DOESN'T LIKE ME?
HAS IT REALLY...
...COME DOWN TO THAT?

hâteau Restaurant
chand
SO...
HOW'S SCHOOL BEEN, KOICHIRO?
DON'T JUST TELL ME ABOUT YOUR GRADES.
I'VE ALREADY LOOKED OVER YOUR REPORT CARD, SO I KNOW YOU'RE DOING WELL.
I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT THAT.
OU KNOW WHAT I SAY...

SCHOOL IS JUST A MINI VERSION OF SOCIETY.
IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT GRADES, BUT LEARNING TO BETTER YOURSELF WHILE YOU'RE THERE.
LEARNING TO CULTIVATE SKILLS THAT WILL IMPRESS PEOPLE...
...AND HOW TO BE CHARISMATIC AND STAND ABOVE EVERYONE AROUND YOU.

SLAM
DON'T SLOUCH!!
JUMP
GASP
CLANG

HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU!?
YOUR POSTURE HAS A HUGE INFLUENCE ON HOW PEOPLE SEE YOU!!
THAT'S A FUNDAMENTAL BASIC! I DON'T SEE WHY IT'S SO HARD!
STOP THAT DISGUSTING POSTURE! YOU LOOK LIKE A COWARD WITH YOUR EYES ALWAYS LOWERED...!
SSSHHH
COUGH
COUGH
SSSSSSSSSS

KOICHIRO-SAN.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
KNOCK
コンコン
KNOCK
...I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT I THINK I CAN START TO ACCEPT WHO I AM.
WHEN I LOOK AT MYSELF IN THE MIRROR, LATELY...
KOICHIRO-SAN?

NO NEW MAIL

I GOTTA SAY... THIS FEELS SORTA WEIRD.
AFTER YOU SAW ME DRESSED AS A GIRL...
...YOU'RE SEEING ME DRESSED AS A GUY, AGAIN.
I'VE BEEN TAKING YOUR ADVICE, SEMPAI...
...AND RE-EVALUATING MY FEELINGS.
THE DOG!* IS THE SAME FOR BOTH GENDERS, REMEMBER?
YEAH... YOU'RE RIGHT.
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
.....

I REALIZED THE PERSON I THOUGHT I LIKED...
...MAYBE ISN'T SOMEONE I EVER REALLY *COULD* LIKE.
I MEAN... WE CAN'T EVEN HAVE A CONVERSATION.
AND EVERY TIME I TALK TO HIM, MY NERVES FEEL LIKE THEY'RE BEING SHREDDED. I'M ALWAYS SO UPSET AFTERWARDS.
I REALIZED HE WAS JUST THE FIRST PERSON TO TREAT ME LIKE A GIRL
HE WAS NICE TO ME...
...AND DID THE KINDS OF THINGS GUYS DO WITH GIRLS...
I THINK... IT WAS JUST HIS WORDS AND HIS ACTIONS THAT MADE MY HEART RACE.
BECAUSE THERE'D NEVER BEEN ANYONE ELSE WHO TREATED ME LIKE THAT.
I ONLY THOUGHT THAT MEANT I LIKED HIM...

IS THERE SOMEBODY ELSE WHO MAKES YOU FEEL THAT WAY?
SO, NOW WHAT?
MAYBE.
NO...
I COULD'VE SWORN..
YEAH?
...YOU WERE INVITING ME TO.

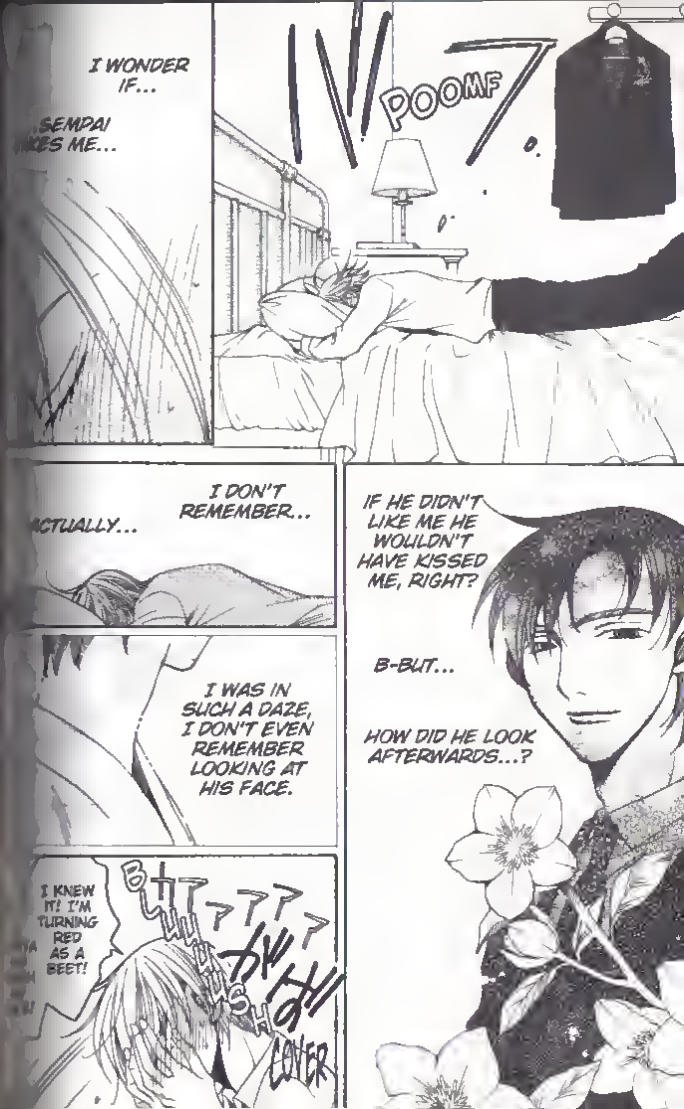
...I ALMOST THOUGHT THAT YOU WANTED ME TO DO THE SAME THINGS HE'D DONE WITH YOU.
BRINGING IT UP WHEN WE'RE ALONE, AND GIVING ME THAT OPENING...
...YOU WERE TRYING TO SEE WHAT I'D DO.
AND BY SAYING THAT...
ESCORT YOU AROUND?
LIKE OPEN THE CAR DOOR FOR YOU?
HE DID THINGS THAT GUYS DO WITH GIRLS, YOU SAID?
N... NO.
NOTHING THAT GENTLE-MANLY.
TH... THAT'S...
.....
.....
.....

HE KISSED YOU?
WELL, THEN?
Y... YEAH...
.....
...NO, WAIT...
UH...

...I WAS JUST KIDDING.
...RIGHT.
OF COURSE... HEH HEH.
COME ON, PLEASE DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT.
.....
KUROSAKI-SEMPAI, YOU'RE SO-

AFTER SCHOOL ℮NIGHTMARE Chapter 28

DAAAAZE
NOT EVEN HOW I GOT BACK HERE.
I WAS SO SHOCKED, I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT.


I WONDER IF...
SEMPAI KES ME...
POOMF
I DON'T REMEMBER...
CTUALLY...
I WAS IN SUCH A DAZE, I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER LOOKING AT HIS FACE.
I KNEW IT! I'M TURNING RED AS A BEET!
BUT I'M SO HAPPY
LOVER
IF HE DIDN'T LIKE ME HE WOULDN'T HAVE KISSED ME, RIGHT?
B-BUT...
HOW DID HE LOOK AFTERWARDS...?

HE'S KIND AND RELIABLE.
HE'S COMPOSED AND EASY TO TALK TO, AND MATURE...
KLATCH
...I'M SURE I'D LIKE KUROSAKI-SEMPAI BETTER THAN SOU.
BUT...BUT JUST SUPPOSING WE WENT OUT...

HOW CAN I THINK SOMETHING SO SELFISH?
I COULD'VE SWORN YOU WERE INVITING ME TO.
IT'S TRUE. I WAS ACTING EXACTLY LIKE THAT'S WHAT I WANTED.
SEMPAI WAS ONLY BEING KIND WHEN HE DIDN'T LET IT GO UNNOTICED.
I SHOULD BE ASHAMED.
HOW LOW OF ME.
WHO'M I KIDDING?

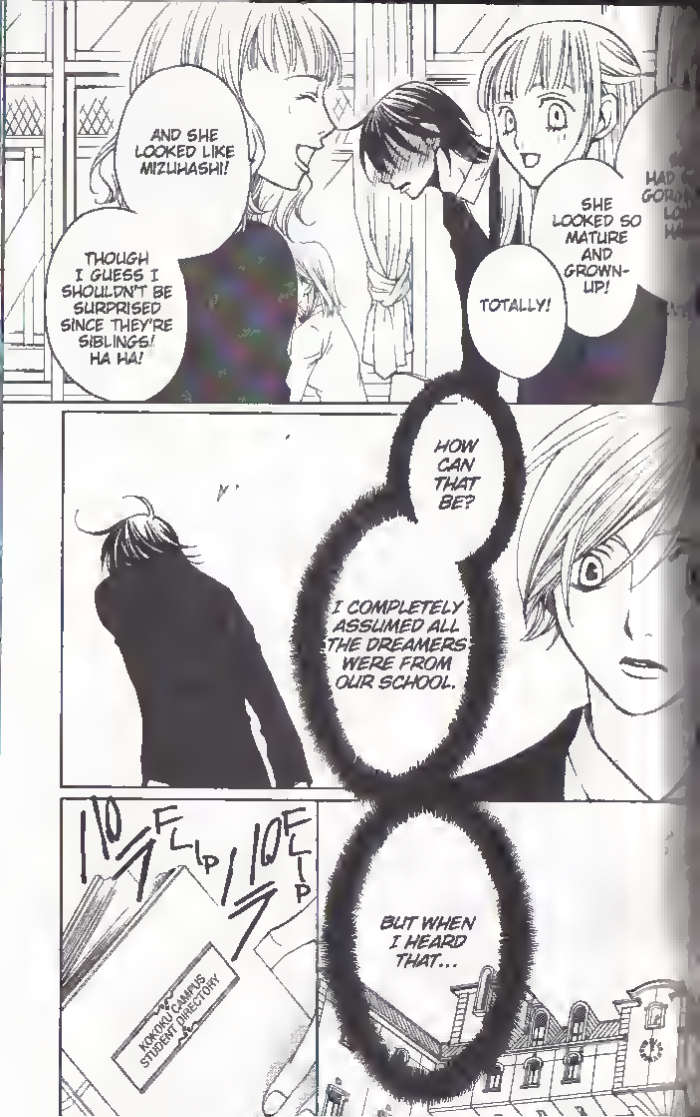
IF I CAN'T BE A KNIGHT, I MAY AS WELL BE A PRINCESS.
I DON'T CARE WHO IT IS, AS LONG AS SOMEONE TREATS ME WELL.
I WANT TO BE PRAISED AND PAMPERED BY ANYONE WHO'S WILLING.
I'M...
...A DESPICABLE GIRL.

IF I'M A GUY, I'M A HYPOCRITICAL PRINCE.
AND IF I'M A GIRL, I'M A SPOILED PRINCESS?
EITHER WAY...
...I'M JUST BAD.

KUREHA...
IT'S ALREADY THURSDAY AND SHE'S STILL NOT BACK.
IF SHE DOESN'T COME BACK...

IT'S SO MUCH EASIER TO WORRY ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE.
IT LETS YOU ESCAPE ALL YOUR OWN PROBLEMS...
HE SAID I SHOULDN'T WORRY..
...SO SOU PROBABLY CONTACTED HER, ALREADY.
OH, MIZU-HASHI!
WE SAW YOUR SISTER AT THE SHIRASAGI FESTIVAL* THE OTHER DAY!
*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
AI-SAN, RIGHT?
SHE'S SO PRETTY!

...UH...
DID SHE... SAY ANY-THING?
BLUUUSH
? OH, DIDN'T K TO ER.
IR FRIEND POINTED ER OUT HIROKO* UHASHI'S AUGHTER.
TRANSLATOR'S NOTES
SHIRASAGI FESTIVAL?
ISN'T THAT...
.....?
HEY, DO YOU GUYS MEAN THE CULTURAL FESTIVAL THAT TAKES PLACE AT SHIRASAGI GIRLS' SCHOOL?
THAT'S RIGHT, THE SCHOOL ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STATION.
THEIR FESTIVALS ARE VERY ELITE. I WAS ONLY INVITED BECAUSE MY FRIEND GOES THERE.
UM... AND SOU'S SISTER...
...IS A STUDENT?
AT SHIRASAGI GIRLS' SCHOOL?
THAT'S RIGHT! ♪

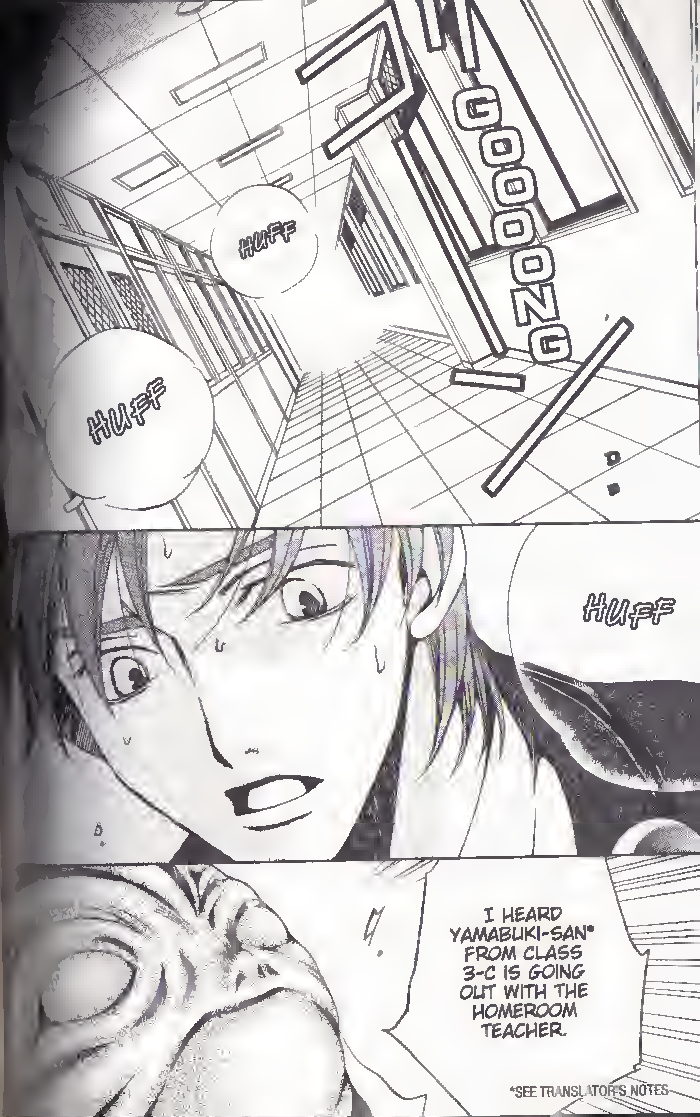

AND SHE LOOKED LIKE MIZUHASHI!
THOUGH I GUESS I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED SINCE THEY'RE SIBLINGS! HA HA!
SHE LOOKED SO MATURE AND GROWN-UP!
TOTALLY!
HOW CAN THAT BE?
I COMPLETELY ASSUMED ALL THE DREAMERS WERE FROM OUR SCHOOL.
FLIP
FLIP
KOKOKO CAMPUS STUDENT DIRECTORY
BUT WHEN I HEARD THAT...

OH...
SENSEI.
UM.
SOU MIZUHASHI HAS AN OLDER SISTER, RIGHT? NAMED AI-SAN...
AH, YES.
I DID THE INTERVIEW WHEN HE APPLIED HERE, AND HE MENTIONED HER.
DOES HE...
...ONLY HAVE ONE SISTER?
HE DOESN'T HAVE A SISTER WHO GOES HERE?
JUST ONE... WHY?
IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR HIM, YOU SHOULD JUST ASK.
GOOOONG
GOOOONG

SO, YOU GOT CRAM SCHOOL TODAY?
NOPE, I'M FREE.
LET'S GO EAT SOMEWHERE
TODAY WE SWAM IN GYM CLASS, SO I'M STARVING!

SORRY FOR MAKING YOU WAIT, SOU.
LET'S DO OUR BEST, TODAY. ♡
.....
DO OUR BEST AT WHAT...?

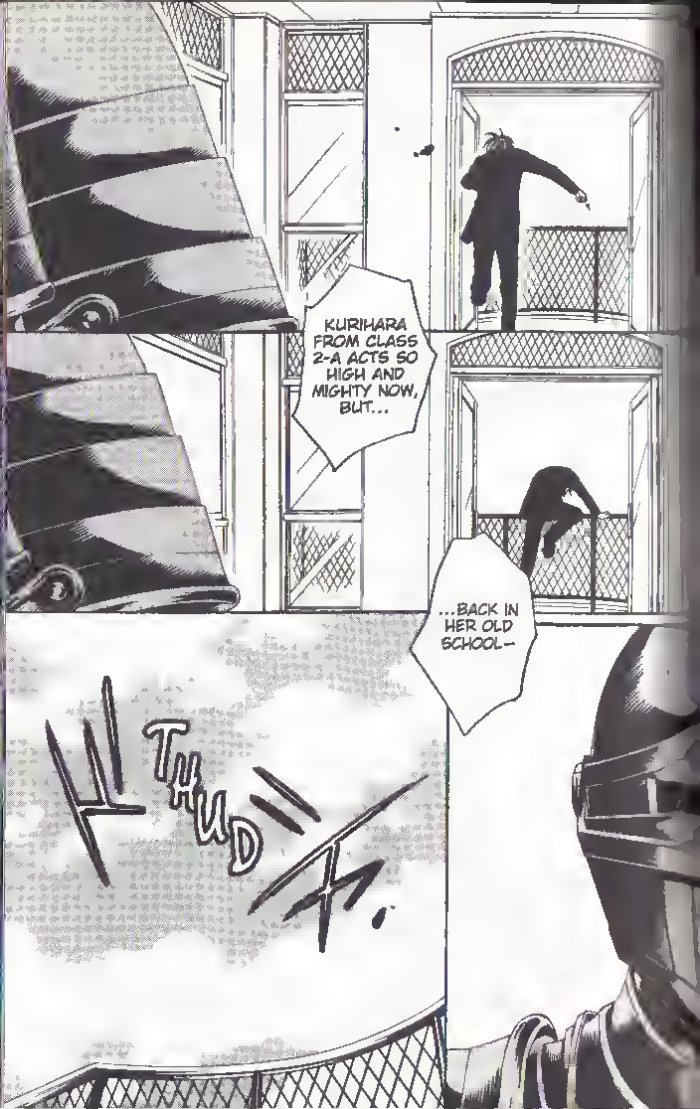
GOOOONG
GOOOONG



*SEE TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

GNNPH
SHUT UP! YOU'RE DRIVING ME CRAZY!!
CHOMP
WHAT IS THIS THING!?
DAMN YOU!!
KURIHARA FROM CLASS 2-A-
SEE TRANSLATOR
OW!!
YOU LITTLE...
...!

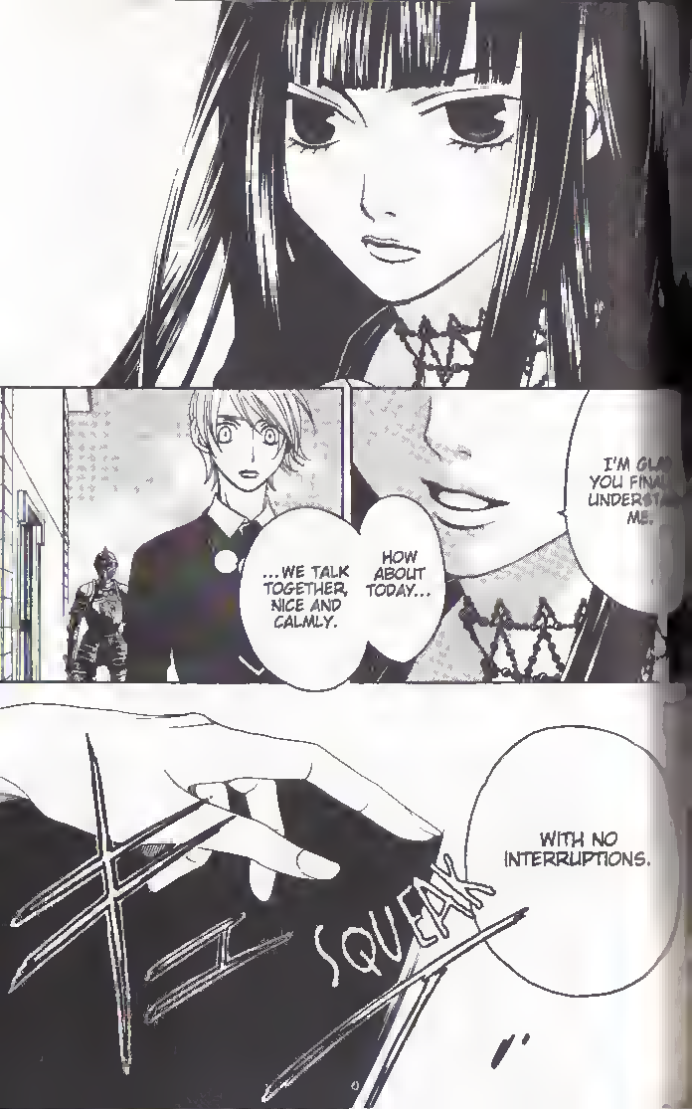
CLANG
HAH...
AH...

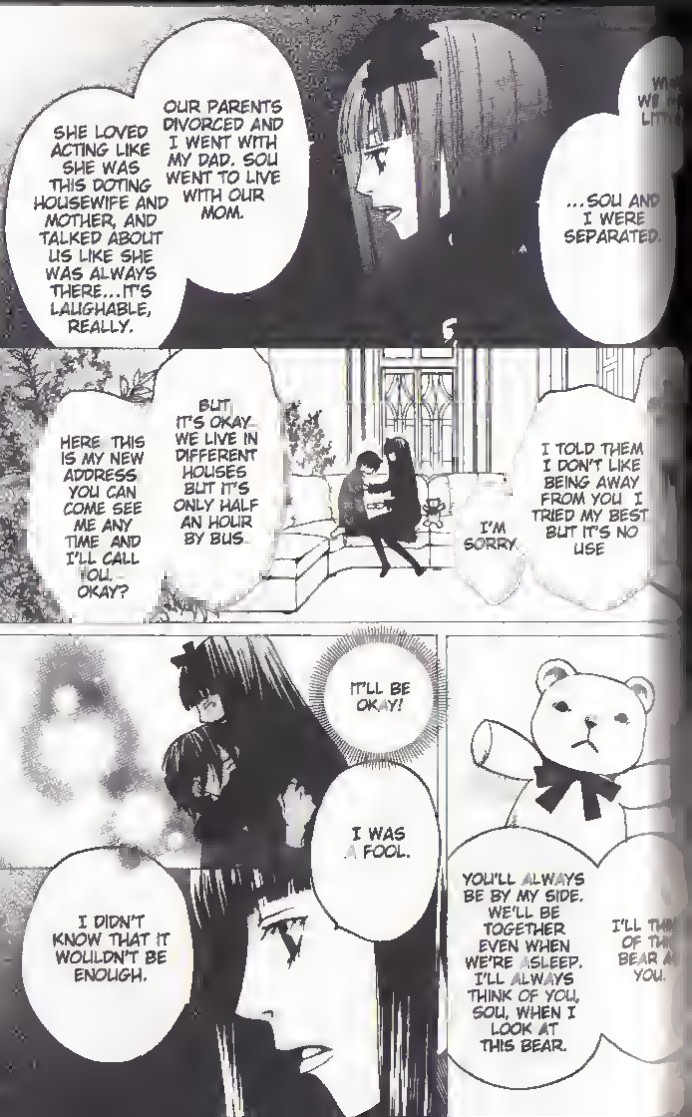

KURIHARA FROM CLASS 2-A ACTS SO HIGH AND MIGHTY NOW, BUT...
...BACK IN HER OLD SCHOOL--
THUD

PEEK
WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?
AAW, DON'T TELL ME I JUST MISSED SOMETHING COOL.

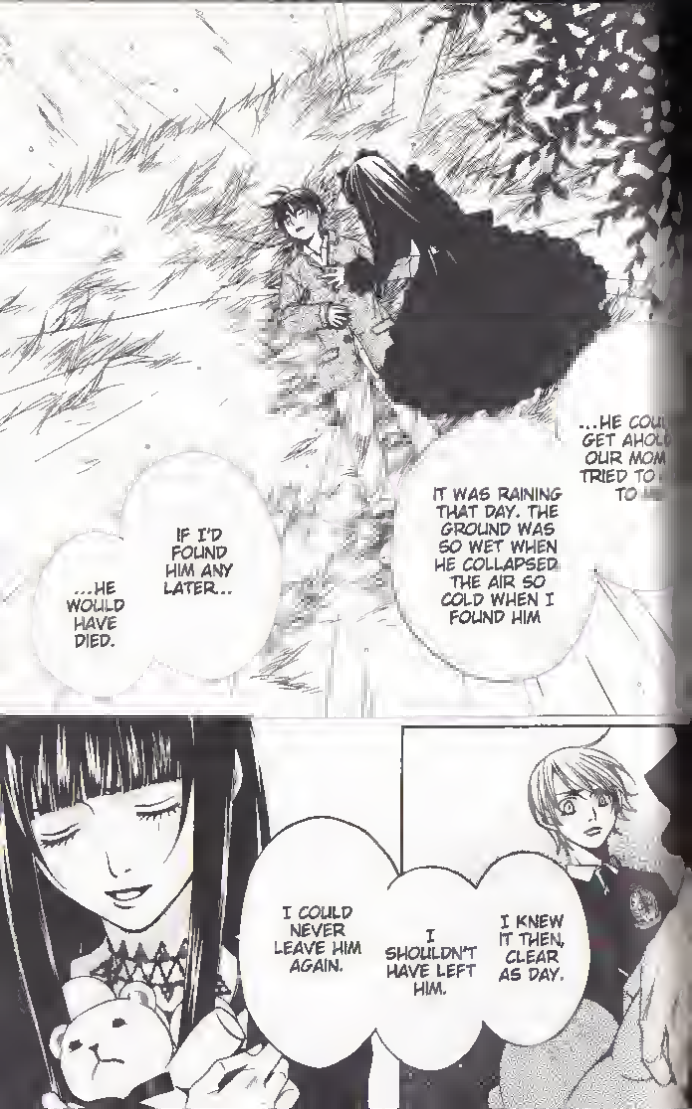
HELLO.
BOW
TODAY ...
...I WANTED TO TALK, SO I CAME TO YOU.
I FINALLY UNDERSTAND WHY YOU DON'T WANT THE KEY.
AND WHY YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN GRADUATING.
IT'S BECAU YOU'RE N A STUDEN HERE.
YOU NEVER WERE. YOU NEVER COULD.

SHIRASAGI'S NOT FAR FROM HERE.
IF YOU JUST NAB A SCHOOL UNIFORM, NOBODY'D THINK TWICE AT SEEING YOU AROUND.
OU SNUCK NTO THIS LASS TO AKE SURE OU DOESN'T RADUATE.
BECAUSE YOU...
DON'T WANT TO BE SEPARATED FROM HIM!


I'M GLA
YOU FINA
UNDERST
ME.
HOW ABOUT TODAY...
...WE TALK TOGETHER, NICE AND CALMLY.
SQUEAK
WITH NO INTERRUPTIONS.


SHE LOVED ACTING LIKE SHE WAS THIS DOTING HOUSEWIFE AND MOTHER, AND TALKED ABOUT US LIKE SHE WAS ALWAYS THERE...IT'S LAUGHABLE, REALLY.
OUR PARENTS DIVORCED AND I WENT WITH MY DAD. SOU WENT TO LIVE WITH OUR MOM.
...SOU AND I WERE SEPARATED.
I'M SORRY.
I TOLD THEM I DON'T LIKE BEING AWAY FROM YOU. I TRIED MY BEST BUT IT'S NO USE
BUT IT'S OKAY. WE LIVE IN DIFFERENT HOUSES BUT IT'S ONLY HALF AN HOUR BY BUS.
HERE. THIS IS MY NEW ADDRESS. YOU CAN COME SEE ME ANY TIME AND I'LL CALL YOU. OKAY?
IT'LL BE OKAY!
I WAS A FOOL.
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT IT WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH.
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE BY MY SIDE. WE'LL BE TOGETHER EVEN WHEN WE'RE ASLEEP. I'LL ALWAYS THINK OF YOU, SOU, WHEN I LOOK AT THIS BEAR.

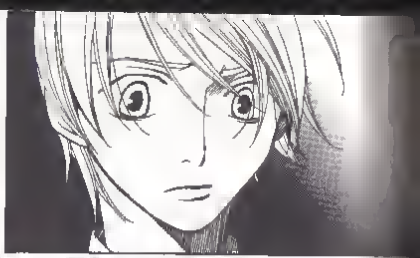
THUMP
TRYING TO REPLACE HIM WITH SOME-THING...
...DIDN'T HELP ANYTHING AT ALL.
NOT EVEN THE HOUSEKEEPER GAVE HIM ATTENTION.
'D COME CLEAN ERY DAY, HURRY TO HER WN HOME.
SOU WAS ALONE WITH OUR MOTHER. MORE SPECIFICALLY, HE WAS ALWAYS ALONE.
THAT WOMAN THOUGHT ONLY ABOUT HER WORK, SO SHE WAS HARDLY EVER HOME.
Please leave a message after the beep
—after the beep
SOU CAUGHT A BAD COLD THAT TURNED INTO PNEUMONIA.
AND EVEN THEN...

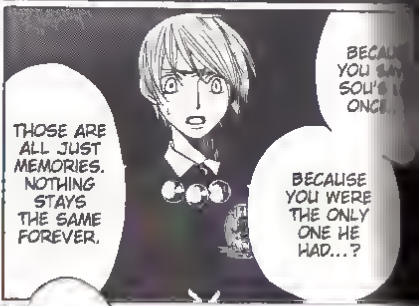

...HE COU
GET AHOL
OUR MOM
TRIED TO
TO
IT WAS RAINING THAT DAY. THE GROUND WAS SO WET WHEN HE COLLAPSED. THE AIR SO COLD WHEN I FOUND HIM
IF I'D FOUND HIM ANY LATER...
...HE WOULD HAVE DIED.
I KNEW IT THEN, CLEAR AS DAY.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT HIM.
I COULD NEVER LEAVE HIM AGAIN.

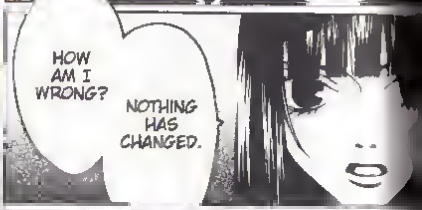
I DECIDED I WOULD BE WITH HIM FOREVER.
NO MATTER WHAT I HAD TO DO TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

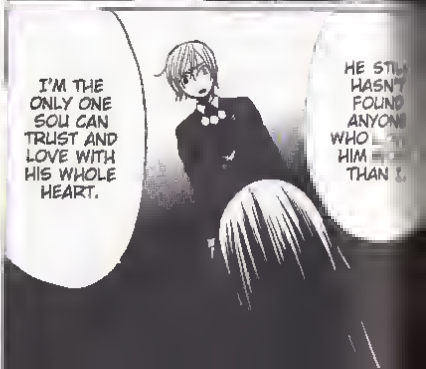
Sketch Excavation

This is a rough sketch I did when Princess magazine requested an illustration for the front cover of "Princess Mashiro in a crown."

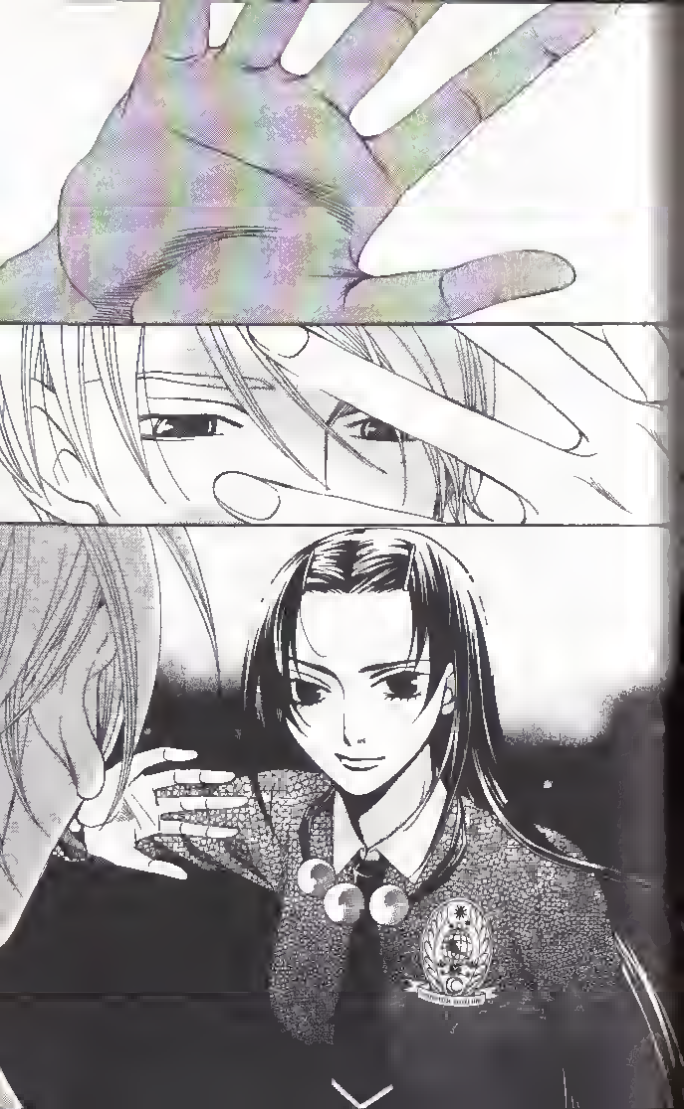



BECAUSE YOU CAN'T SOU'S E ONCE...
BECAUSE YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE HE HAD...?
THOSE ARE ALL JUST MEMORIES. NOTHING STAYS THE SAME FOREVER.

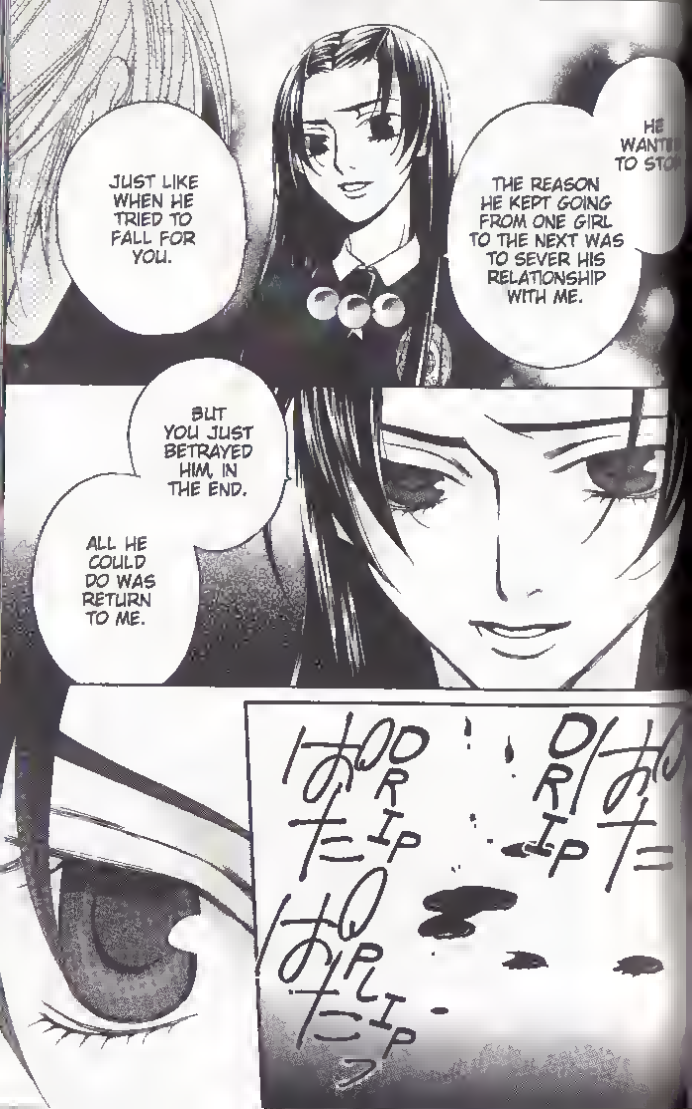


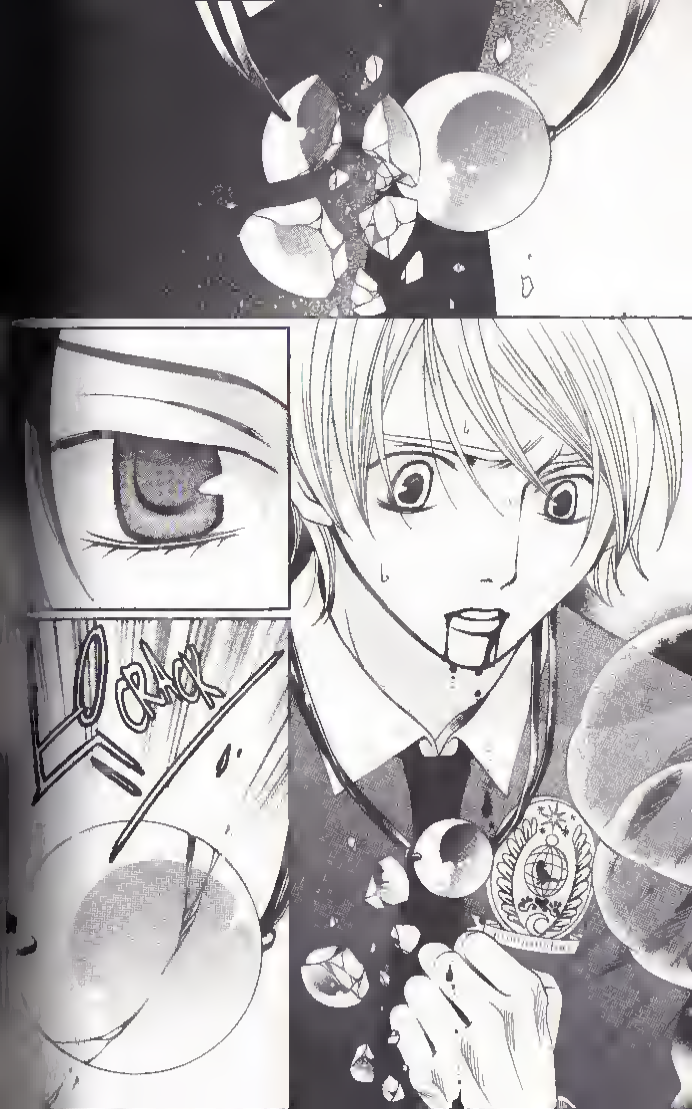


THEN WHY...
...DO YOU KEEP THE FORM OF A CHILD!?
PERHAPS BECAUSE BACK THEN...
...I WAS STILL BEAUTIFUL.
WHY, INDEED.
AFTER ALL, AS A CHILD...
...I'D NEVER DREAMED OF THE THINGS THAT WOULD HAPPEN BETWEEN US.

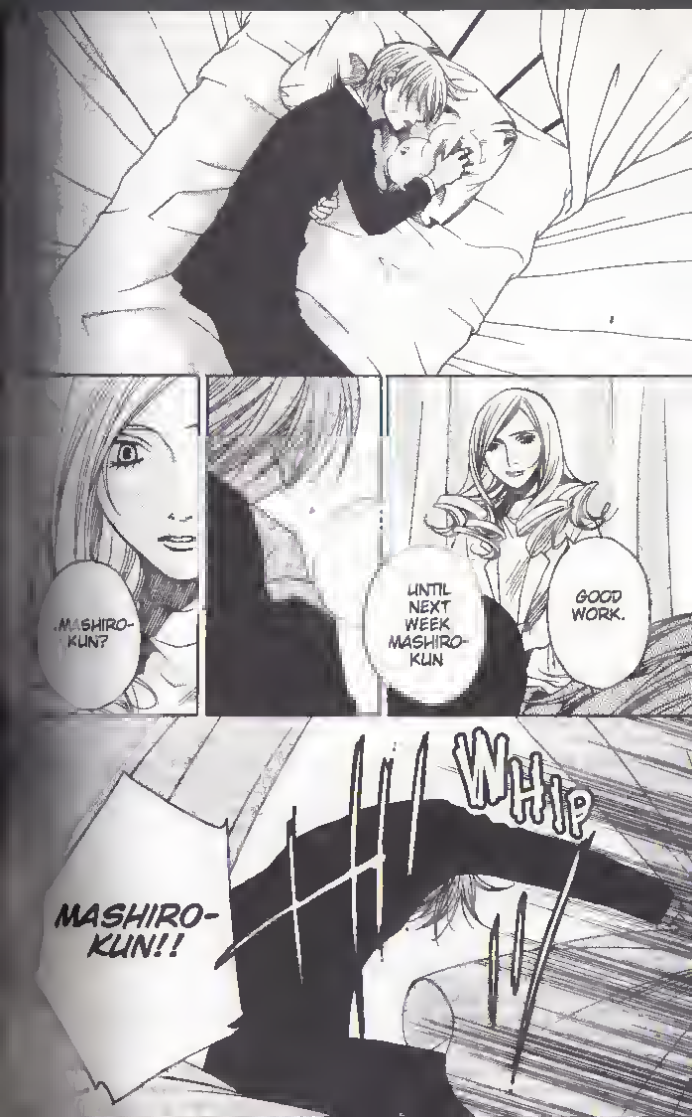


SOU'S FIRST TIME...
...WAS WITH ME.
SPLIT
LIES!
YOU'RE HIS SISTER!
WE HAD NO CHOICE.
OU WAS L I HAD. AND I AS THE LY ONE COULD OVE.

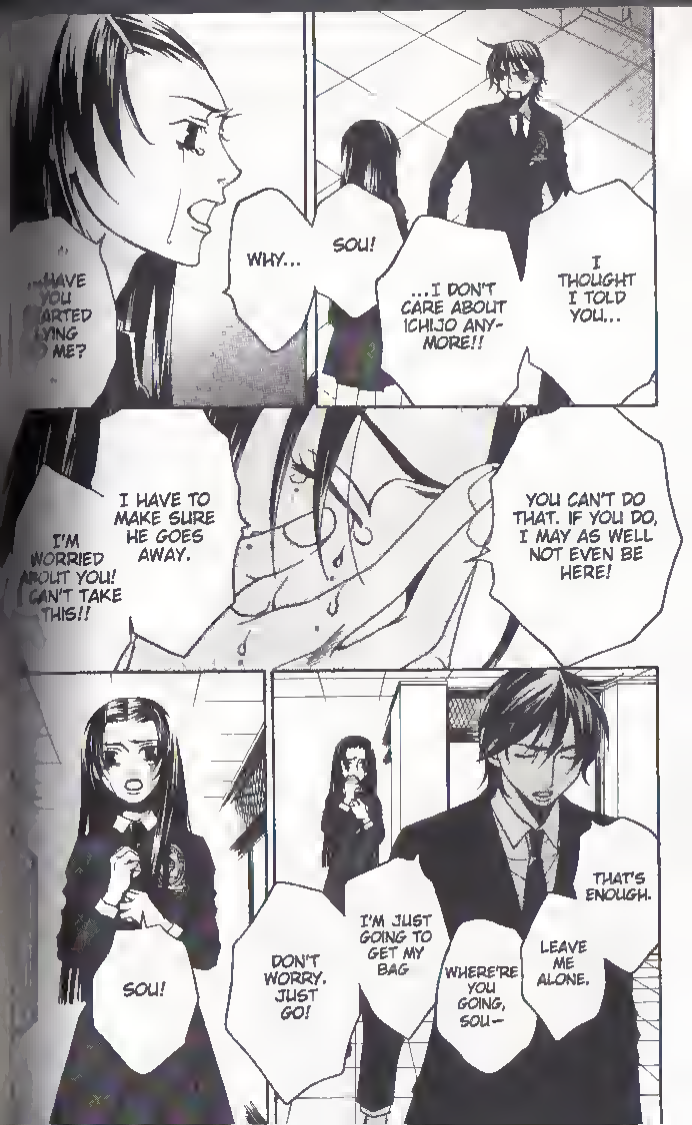

HE WANTED TO STOP
THE REASON HE KEPT GOING FROM ONE GIRL TO THE NEXT WAS TO SEVER HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH ME.
JUST LIKE WHEN HE TRIED TO FALL FOR YOU.
BUT YOU JUST BETRAYED HIM, IN THE END.
ALL HE COULD DO WAS RETURN TO ME.
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP


CRACK

I GUESS THIS WAS A LITTLE TOO MUCH FOR YOU.
FROM NOW ON SOU AND I ARE GOING TO LIVE TOGETHER, JUST THE TWO OF US.
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG.
THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED.
FORGET ALL OF THIS
GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM AND SLEEP.


MASHIRO-KUN?
UNTIL NEXT WEEK MASHIRO-KUN
GOOD WORK.
WHIP
MASHIRO-KUN!!

WHY'D YOU TALK TO ICHIJO!?
YOU DIDN'T NEED TO TELL HIM ALL THAT!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID WE SHOULD KEEP IT A SECRET!!
NOBODY ELSE KNEW.
MASHIRO ICHIJO'S...
...GOING TO GET RID OFME!
IF I LOST YOU, SOU, I'D DIE...


...HAVE YOU STARTED LYING TO ME?
WHY...
SOU!
...I DON'T CARE ABOUT ICHIJO ANY-MORE!!
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU...
I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU! CAN'T TAKE THIS!!
I HAVE TO MAKE SURE HE GOES AWAY.
YOU CAN'T DO THAT. IF YOU DO, I MAY AS WELL NOT EVEN BE HERE!
SOU!
DON'T WORRY. JUST GO!
I'M JUST GOING TO GET MY BAG
WHERE'RE YOU GOING, SOU—
LEAVE ME ALONE.
THAT'S ENOUGH.

SOU!!

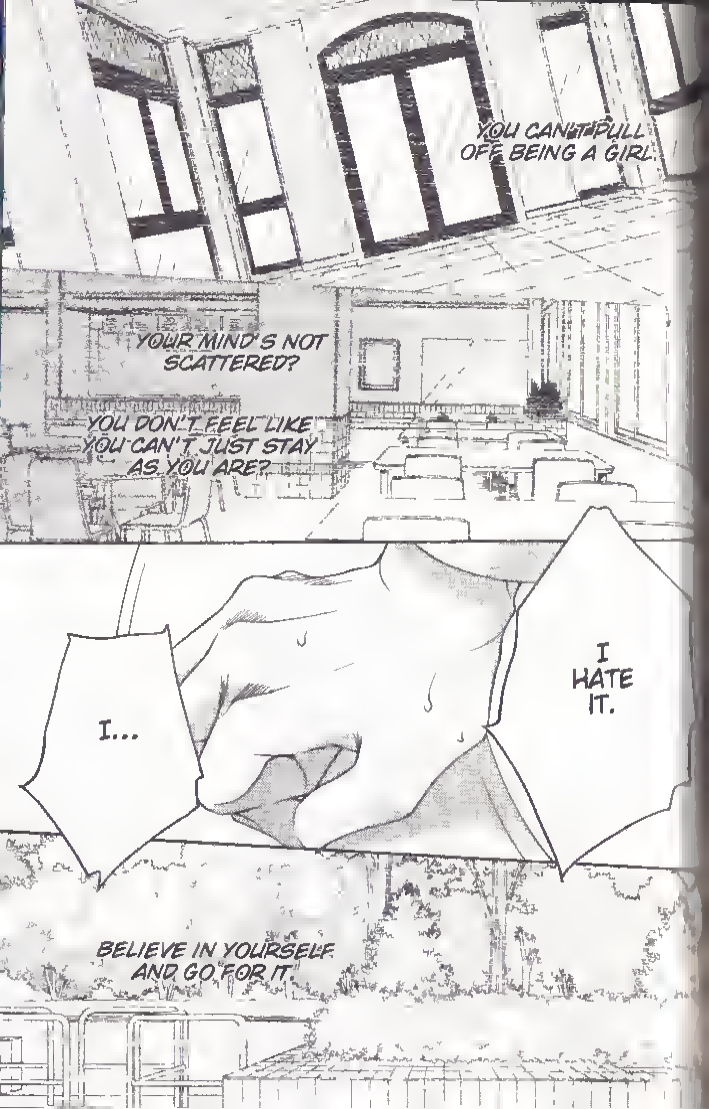
SOU...
.....
I TALKED...
...TO YOUR SISTER.
SHE TOLD ME ABOUT YOU AND HER.
TOLD ME
BRYTHING.

...IT MAKES ME SICK.
TO PUT IT BLUNTLY...
I'LL NEVER ACCEPT IT.
I KNOW I DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO YELL AT YOU.
...WHAT OTHER PEOPLE DO. NO MATTER WHAT, EVEN IF IT'S WRONG.
I KNOW IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS...

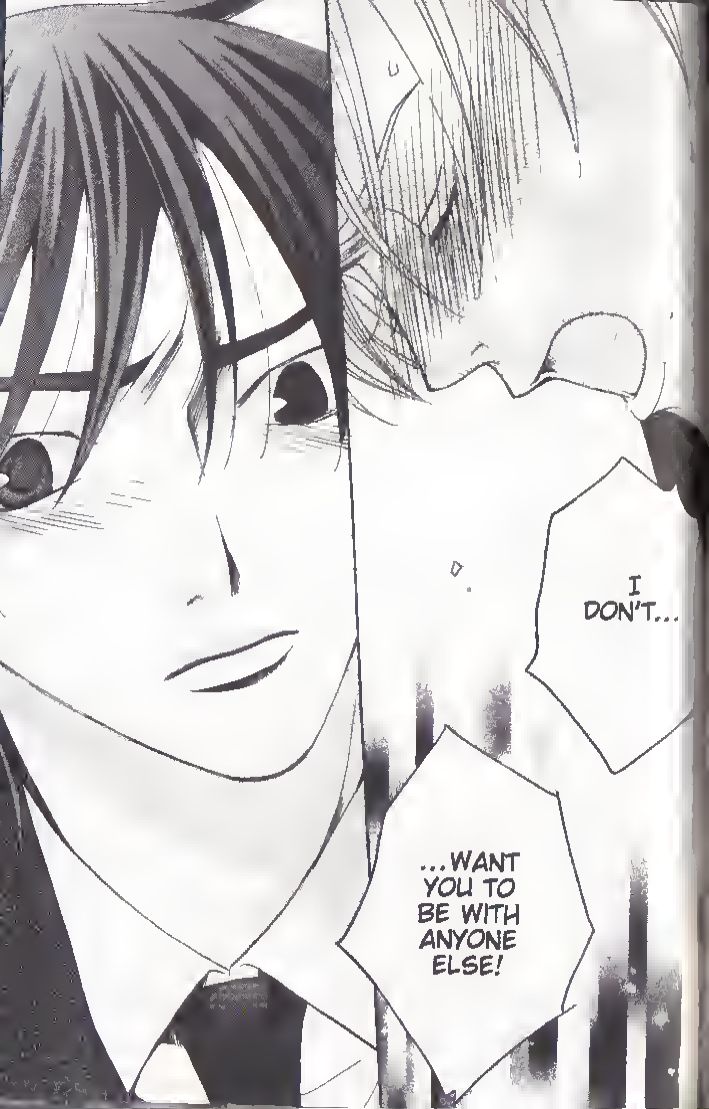
AND I KNOW THAT...
...IF I FORCE MY FEELINGS ON YOU...
...YOU'LL JUST HATE ME ALL OVER AGAIN.
EVEN IF I'M HATED...
...AND NOBODY ACCEPTS ME, AND I'M ALL ALONE...
BUT I DON'T CARE ANYMORE!!
...I DON'T CARE!!

AND KUREHA...
I DON'T WANT TO SAY THAT I'M GLAD YOU GUYS GO SO WELL TOGETHER!!
I DON'T WANT TO FORGIVE WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR SISTER! I CAN'T DO IT!

ICHIJO, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW! THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SAID ANYTHING LIKE THIS!!
BUT I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE!!
I DON'T LIKE IT. I DON'T...
...WANT YOU...
..TO BE LIKE THAT WITH ANYBODY, SOU!

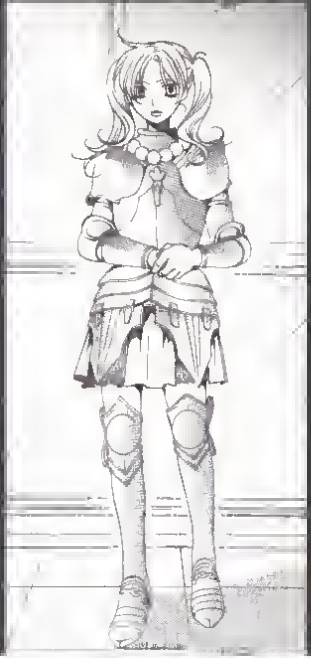

YOU CAN'T PULL OFF BEING A GIRL.
YOUR MIND'S NOT SCATTERED?
YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU CAN'T JUST STAY AS YOU ARE?
I...
I HATE IT.
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND GO FOR IT.

SOU, I...
...LOVE YOU!

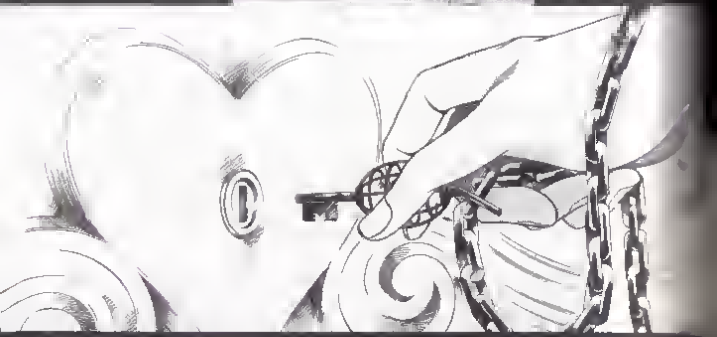

I DON'T...
...WANT YOU TO BE WITH ANYONE ELSE!

Chapter 28 / OVER

Kureha's true power is finally unlocked...



...but who holds the key?



In The Next Volume of
AFTER SCHOOL NIGHTMARE

Translator's Notes:

Pg. 32 – *Aoyama and Kakimoto*
More color-names.
青山 The first symbol "ao" means "blue."
柿本 The first symbol "kaki" means "persimmon" an orange-red.

Pg. 132 - *dogi*
The uniform used in dojo training activities like karate and kendo. They're white, and made of thick, heavy material.

Pg. 149 – *Shirasagi*
This high school's name means white heron, and is symbolic because our characters' own school is "Kokoku High" or "great bird". Having two local high schools named after birds is surely no coincidence.

Pg. 150 – *Hiroko*
Sou's mother also participates in the color-name theme. The "hi" of "Hiroko" denotes a scarlet red color. Coincidentally (or not) this is the exact opposite of her children's blue-oriented names.

Pg. 156 – *Yamabuki*
山吹 This is the name of a variety of yellow rose.

Pg. 157 – *Kurihara*
栗原 The first symbol "kuri" means "chestnut" and indicates a reddish brown color.

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AFTER SCHOOL NIGHTMARE

THIS DREAM DRAWS BLOOD...

Alliances form as friendships fade, and soon the nightmarish dream-world becomes preferable to the turmoil in Mashiro's everyday life. With Kureha spurning him and Sou ignoring him, Mashiro has no choice but to seek the answers he needs from a most unlikely source...

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RATED OT
SLIDER TEEN
16+

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AFTER SCHOOL NIGHTMARE

Our Story So Far

Mashiro Ichijo is a high school student whose body is half female, and half male. One day, he's called down to a secret infirmary to participate in a "special class" he needs to graduate. He learns from another student, Kureha, that each person takes on their true form in this class. When each student reaches their personal goal, their most heart-felt dream will come true. Mashiro decides to use this class to become a true male.

But when another dreamer – a merciless knight – exposes his body's secret and Kureha's tragic past, Mashiro vows to protect the weaker dreamers.

Who is the real person behind the knight? While trying to identify the real people behind the facades, Mashiro is accosted by Sou, a male student he doesn't much like. Sou tells him "you're a girl" and then forces a kiss upon him. Wondering whether Sou could be another dreamer, maybe even the knight, Mashiro becomes obsessed with Sou.

But when Sou's sister, Ai, reveals that Sou is the knight, Mashiro is stunned. Vowing that he'll never forgive Sou, Mashiro tries to free himself from his confused feelings by spending a tender night with Kureha.

Then Kureha tells him she wants to break up, now that she sees what is really in his heart. Giving in to despair, Mashiro stops coming to the class and resolves in his heart that he will merely be who he can be. But what will happen next...?

Participants in the Class
If you get a hold of the key, you can graduate
Every time your heart takes damage, a bead on the cord breaks. When all three break, you are eliminated from the dream.
Ai Mizuhashi

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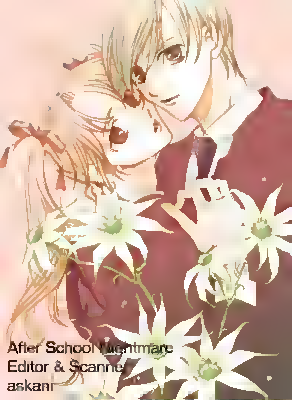
After School Nightmare
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askani